

VIOLET WOOD-HOOPOE RAIDING NEST OF SPECKLE-FRONTED WEAVER On 23 September 1977, two Violet Wood-Hoopoes *Phoeniculus granti* were seen along the road between Lake Baringo and Maragat, Kenya. The birds, an adult and an immature, were foraging in dry acacia about 10m high, and were flying from nest to nest in a diffuse colony of Speckle-fronted Weavers *Sporopipes frontalis*. At one nest, the adult wood-hoopoe inserted its head into the nest and came out with an egg in its mouth, which it promptly swallowed. It extracted another egg and then moved on to another nest. The owners were perched 30 cm from their nest and made no effort to deter the wood-hoopoes.

In 5 minutes of observation the two birds visited four nests, but were only seen eating eggs from one. This is the first time, to our knowledge, that wood-hoopoes have been recorded eating eggs.

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OLIVE-TREE WARBLER AT DODOMA, CENTRAL TANZANIA The elusive Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum* has so far been found in very few localities in Tanzania. Apart from a probable sighting by Meiklejohn at Mwanza, the other records are due to J.S.S. Beesley who reported the bird in the Rukwa area, in an Arusha garden and in the Arusha National Park (Backhurst, Britton & Mann 1973). Since its occurrence in Africa (and indeed throughout its range) is so imperfectly known, the following records are considered worth reporting.

All records (1956-58) refer to my Dodoma garden, which lay at an altitude of 1150 m on rising ground on the southwestern edge of the town some 1100 m southwest of the railway station (6° 11' S., 35° 45' E.). The garden had an area of nearly 0.5 ha and was bounded by a hedge of *minyara* *Euphorbia tirucalli* which, on the southwestern side of the garden, grew to a height of 2.5 m and was 1 m thick. Beyond the hedge at this point were two or three acacia trees (6 m high) growing out of thorn scrub. All contacts with the Olive-tree Warbler were confined to this part of the *minyara* hedge and the acacia scrub.

The warbler first attracted attention with its song on 18 February 1956 and finally disappeared on 31 March 1956 during which time aural or visual contacts were made on 34 days. In the following year contacts were made on 28 days between 24 February and 26 March. In 1958 daily records were not kept but an Olive-tree Warbler appeared in the same place in late February and left a month later. There were no contacts in 1955, 1959, 1960 or 1961, although daily checks were made, nor were any other Olive-tree Warblers found in the Dodoma area.

The bird itself was remarkably approachable although it did not seem to venture far out of the hedge or scrub. Its very large bill was its most characteristic visual feature. In the shade of the hedge the lighter-coloured lower mandible became almost invisible giving the bill a markedly decurved aspect. The song was somewhat acrocephaline but distinctly 'contralto' in pitch; as far as can be judged it was identical with the song recorded by E.D.H. Johnson (Palmer & Boswall 1975) on its breeding ground in Bulgaria. Close approach and numerous sightings allowed me to confirm that the bird in each year was not in moult.

These records are strongly suggestive of the return of the same bird to a very restricted winter territory - an example of *Ortstreue* (Moreau

1969) which possibly occurs in other *Hippolais* species (e.g. Pearson 1972: 52) and even in this species (Vernon 1970, Sinclair 1976). Tree (1972) has commented on the common association of *H. olivetorum* and the Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* in acacia bush in Rhodesia. This shrike was also common in the acacia bush in and around Dodoma and one was invariably present in the same part of the garden as the warbler.

These Dodoma records of the Olive-tree Warbler seem to be the most complete so far for Tanzania. Their isolation from other occurrences, however, may point to the presence of an aberrant individual.

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FIRST RECORDED NEST SITE OF *ALETHE FUELLEBORNI* On 11 - 12 December 1976, whilst in montane forest north of Lushoto in the West Usambaras, north-eastern Tanzania, I twice disturbed a White-chested Alethe *Alethe fuelleborni* from a nest, and once watched it return and re-settle. The nest was situated some 4 - 5 m high in a tree on a steep incline 30 m inside the forest. Although it was in a fairly exposed position I was unable to examine the nest closely and merely noted 'something mossy on a stump close to the main trunk with two slender creepers as the only cover'. The site of this nest is higher than expected for a species which is generally considered to be a ground-feeder, living in the ground-stratum (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1960). The eggs of this species remain unknown (P.L. and H.A. Britton *in litt.*).

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ACCIDENTAL PARASITIZATION OF AN EASTERN DOUBLE-COLLARED SUNBIRD BY A VARIABLE SUNBIRD The Eastern Double-collared Sunbird *Nectarinia mediocris* is a highland species found in central and western Kenya in areas over 1500 m, although most common in forests above 2000 m. The range of the Variable Sunbird *N. venusta falkensteini* overlaps that of *mediocris*, but *venusta* tends to be most plentiful at lower altitudes. The two species often come into contact between 2000 and 2500 m, especially in gardens

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